



Public Health  
England



Duncan Selbie  
Chief Executive

## Friday message

Friday 6 June 2014

**Dear everyone**

Cancer remains a massive threat to health and wellbeing despite some heroic successes in the past few years. PHE has inherited deep partnerships in the world of cancer and we intend to take these even further, especially in our work on prevention and early diagnosis. On Thursday Harpal Kumar, Chief Executive of Cancer Research UK (CRUK), came to see us to discuss how we could develop our joint work in a number of areas, while on Monday Ciarán Devane, Chief Executive of Macmillan Cancer Support, endorsed the value of our work for patient care at our first joint meeting with the NHS England Board. This level of support from such distinguished leaders in the voluntary sector is invigorating and inspires us to strive even harder to match their commitment to improving outcomes for patients and the public. We know that 40% of cancers are linked to preventable risk factors such as tobacco, diet and alcohol and welcome CRUK's commitment to increase their work on prevention, which will undoubtedly have additional benefits for conditions beyond cancer. We are rightly proud of our *Be Clear on Cancer* campaigns which have recently been shortlisted for two marketing awards. Our data assets on cancer are second to none and are already widely used by partners for research and service quality improvement but we could do much more. Our National Cancer Intelligence Network Cancer Outcomes [conference](#) in Birmingham next week will again present the work of NCIN for patients and clinicians and is always a humbling event as patients describe their experiences of cancer. We are particularly grateful to both Macmillan and CRUK for their support in helping to make our data more available to researchers and clinicians.

At the NHS Confederation conference this week there has been significant debate about how we shift health care "from repair to prevention", in the words of Health Minister Norman Lamb. Today a [report](#), *The Revolution will be Improvised*, has been published on the work that we, along with a broad coalition of partners, undertook to discover the best approach for doing this. The report highlights what we have learned about leading systems and how this differs from leading organisations, including the different behaviours that are required for collaborative working to be successful. I commend it as a worthwhile read as we take on the challenges of making the systems work for the people we serve and for the people who work within them.

And finally, I am delighted to say that the groundbreaking work in the North East to tackle smoking and tobacco harm has been recognised internationally with a prestigious award from the World Health Organisation (WHO). Now funded by all 12 local authorities in the North East, *Fresh* was the UK's first dedicated regional tobacco programme, set up in 2005 to tackle the worst rates of smoking related illness and death in England. *Fresh* is also acting as the tobacco lead for our North East PHE Centre. In the first five years of its existence smoking rates in the North East fell at twice the national average and in recognition of this, *Fresh* director Ailsa Rutter has been [awarded](#) a WHO World No Tobacco Day medal. Our congratulations to her for this personal and professional achievement.

**With best wishes**